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SPACE CENTER Roundup

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LYNDON B. JOHNSON SPACE CENTER, HOUSTON, TEXAS

99th
Inspection

Follow-up phase begins

By Nicole Cloutier

The signs are all down, exhibits packed up and tables stowed away, but Inspection99 is by no means over. Scores of volunteers, some of the 2,800 who volunteered to make the on-site event a success, will begin following up on the hundreds of requests for additional information from 199 guests.

"We've received more than 650 Technical Assistance Requests," said Charlene Gilbert, Inspection99 chairperson. "It's a great testament to the success of the event and one that will encompass months of follow on activity from our incredible staff to make sure all leads are explored."

This year, staff will be using an online tracking database to log the requests and follow up activity. Organizers hope the new process will be easier for users and will help ensure all requests get all necessary attention.

"In addition to implementing a new Web-based TAR entry and status system, we're also capturing 'lessons learned,'" said Gilbert. "We'll soon have the capability to track them on the Web."

More than 2,500 business, industry and manufacturing professionals took advantage of the three-day event to talk with NASA representatives and investigate opportunities to convert space technology to on-Earth benefits. Organizers say there were a higher number of manufacturing and petrochemical guests than in years past and more decision-makers.

"Assessment of the registration data indicated a shift to a more technical audience this year," said Gilbert. "The interaction between attendees and our technical personnel was key and played a significant role in Inspection99's success."

This year's audience also reflects the growing international marketplace, as people from 27 countries, 44 states, Puerto Rico and D.C. pre-registered to attend. As with years past, guest feed back from Inspection99 has been positive.

"This has been a great event," said Henry Morton, president of Selectronics, an electrical design and manufacturing company. "They've done a fabulous job putting it together and everyone we've met has been very cordial."

Morton and his wife, Christine, traveled from Wadesboro, N.C. to tour Inspection99 all three days.

"We have been going non-stop since our arrival Wednesday, and we haven't even made it to the electronics section yet," said Christine Morton the Friday afternoon of Inspection. She serves as vice president of acquisitions for the firm and said they had already seen several technologies they were interested in exploring further. "Particularly, methods for developing non-invasive biomedical sensors," said Morton.

The annual exhibition is tailored for business and industry entrepreneurs receptive to ways to maximize developments done in the pursuit of space exploration. But there are other benefits as well.

"Inspection also is a unique opportunity for JSC employees to see firsthand what other organizations throughout our center are doing," said Ray Melton, technical assistant to the manager at White Sands Test Facility. "It really reinforces the unity of working for NASA, and our



NASA JSC Photo 99E13764 by Benny Benavides

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presence at this event is a good reminder that we're part of the JSC team."

WSTF representatives said they had an excellent response from the visitors adding there was no substitute for having face-to-face contact with technical points of contact. He cited one case where he was discussing with a Hamilton Sunstrand visitor the computer modeling technology WSTF had developed and the testing done there to simulate the impact of micrometeoroids and orbital debris (MMOD).

"He came to our table and was very impressed by the work we had done on MMOD impact analysis and simulation, and said it would be really valuable for his work with the space suits," said Melton. "He was astonished when I told him we'd already done several hypervelocity impact tests on actual EVA suit materials, and the gentlemen who ran those tests is right over there. A few minutes later the two engineers had met and discussed the testing, and with a quick phone call we had a copy of the test report on its way to the space suit engineer that very day! That was very gratifying to be able to have that kind of immediate, direct result. That is just one example of what makes these Inspection events so valuable."

WSTF was only one of many NASA sites that took advantage of Inspection to make technical points of contact. Stennis and Goddard Space Flight Center also participated and Ames Research Center had numerous exhibits at the event. Approximately 80 exhibits were provided by other NASA centers, universities and industry.

"We were pleased to have such a significant number of our NASA and NASA-team colleagues participating," said Gilbert. "Their enthusiasm in supporting this year's Inspection, in both the number of exhibits and in technical personnel, was outstanding." ■

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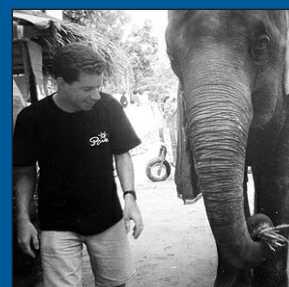
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at JSC for
modifications.

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